

Uinta campgrounds brace for onslaught

Low-elevation sites open with full services. Visitors warned about high water.

By Darcy Kirkham
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PROVO — Campgrounds in the Uinta National Forest will likely be full by noon Friday as thousands flock to the mountains for the Memorial Day weekend.

Between 200,000 and 300,000 visitors are expected in the Uinta National Forest this weekend.

"Campgrounds start filling up by Thursday night, and most are full by Friday at noon because a lot of people take the day off," said Loyal Clark, Uinta National Forest public affairs specialist.

"Half of the campground sites are on the reservation system and can be reserved up to a year in advance; the other half are first come first serve."

Campgrounds at low elevations in the Uinta National Forest are open with full services, but high mountain areas are still wet and snow-packed, limiting back-country hiking and camping.

Creeks, streams and rivers are currently flowing high and swift and are expected to remain high for several weeks. People should avoid standing too close to stream and river banks.

"With the high water this year, we are extremely concerned — please keep kids away from the water," said Clark.

The wet weather is effecting roads, insect populations and recreational activities as well.

"A lot of the roads are muddy and prone to rutting. We ask people that when they are recreating, they avoid the wet roads and the fragile areas, because



Tom Kase and son Byron take a walk in American Fork Canyon.

there is severe erosion," Clark said.

Also, the tick population is high this year. Ticks burrow in the skin and can cause Lyme disease if not treated properly.

"People need to make sure that

if they are out in the woods, they don't take any ticks home with them," said Clark.

Fishing is not good because of high flows in the streams right now. Most are muddy and flowing too fast. Forest officials say that

better fishing can be found at Strawberry Reservoir and other reservoirs without ice.

Current Creek Reservoir, just past Strawberry, was recommended by forest officials because it has good camping and fishing opportunities at a secluded site.

The Forest Service will be working hard over the weekend, spending time at the overnight campgrounds and day sites, talking to people, passing out garbage bags and keeping campfires in designated areas.

Canyon conditions around Utah County vary, but forest officials advise people to beware of the following:

- American Fork Canyon — The new fee-demonstration booth has been delayed and will not be operational until midsummer.

- Heber Ranger District — Mill Hollow and Wolf Creek Campgrounds are inaccessible because of snow. All other campgrounds will be open. For questions, call 664-0470.

- Pleasant Grove Ranger District — Little Mill, Granite Flat and Hope campgrounds will be open with water and fees. The Alpine Loop Road will open Thursday afternoon. Cascade Springs is accessible from Midway. Picnic areas will be open for day use only, no camping. Call 785-3563 for more information.

- Spanish Fork Ranger District — Blackhawk and Payson Lakes campgrounds will have limited services, all others are open with water and fees. Diamond and Palmyra campgrounds will remain closed due to construction in Diamond Fork Canyon. Diamond Fork Canyon is closed from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 12:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays. It will be open all day on Saturdays and Sundays.

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